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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

STAT

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29 October 1986

Mr. Daniel S. Wheeler
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear Mr. Wheeler:

Mr. William Giles' article, "Media Leaks: A Two-Way Street," in the November 1986 edition of THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE inaccurately represents the seriousness of the problem the US Intelligence Community and the nation face with respect to media disclosures of classified information. Damaging leaks of classified sources and methods have seriously affected the US Intelligence Community's ability to protect the nation. Agents have been arrested and have disappeared--they were probably executed; valuable technical collection systems have been compromised and must be replaced at vast expense to the taxpayer; and our relationships with other intelligence services have been damaged by unauthorized disclosures.

Mr. Giles does not mention any of this and treats leaks of sensitive data as a game. It is no game; it is a serious problem that should concern us all.

Director Casey explained our concerns in some depth last April to the American Society of Newspaper Editors. In doing so, he noted that he is required by law to protect the vital sources and methods by which we collect intelligence. He takes that responsibility seriously and he asked for the cooperation of the media. When the nation's ability to protect itself is damaged, all Americans suffer--journalists and non-journalists alike. While the Government is responsible for protecting properly classified information

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and for disciplining those who violate their oaths of office by illegally purveying such information to the media, the media must also bear the responsibility for acting as a "fence" for stolen goods and for its involvement in damaging the nation's security.

The media and the Intelligence Community must reason together on national security matters for the protection of all Americans. We are always ready to do so.

Sincerely,

George V. Lauder
Director, Public Affairs

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